

that age more than any other they were accused of corruption, and the \* sisour/ or juryman, was the special butt of the moralist. The juries were often the creatures of powerful and unscrupulous men. At best they were unpopular as the instruments of convictions under the Statute of Labourers, and it is probable that their connection with this law was one cause of the peculiar odium in which many who had acted on juries were held at the time of the Rising. Wycliffe, in attacking the oppressive thralldom under which some lords held their servants, describes how they 'will not meekly hear a poor man's cause and help him in his right, but suffer jurymen of the country to destroy them, and rather withhold poor men their hire, for which they spend their flesh and blood.'<sup>1</sup> The words imply a connection between juries and the question of a fair wage, which the Statute of Labourers supplies.

The horrible fate of the Chief Justice of England, Sir John Cavendish, is typical of the relation of the rebels to the law-courts. He was a marked man, not only as the head of his profession, but as holding a special commission to enforce the Statute of Labourers in Essex and Suffolk. Being on circuit at the time of the rebellion in a fen district of the latter county, he was overtaken by rioters near a small village called Lakenheath. He fled hard to the nearest river, on which lay a boat, his only chance of safety. He was almost within reach of the bank, when his hopes were frustrated by a woman who happened to be standing there. The prejudice of her class overcame the merciful instincts of her sex, and she pushed the boat into the middle of the stream. The pursuers came up and Cavendish was killed. His bloody head was exhibited in Bury market-place on the top of the pillory. The head of the Prior of Bury was borne in by the mob from Newmarket, and placed by that of the justice. In mockery of the friendship that had existed between the man of the law and the man of the Church, their lifeless lips were put together.<sup>2</sup>

Lawyers were unpopular with the peasantry, not only because they enforced the Statute of Labourers, but because they

<sup>1</sup> **Matt., 234.**

« **Powell, 13-4; Wals. ii. 2-3.**